

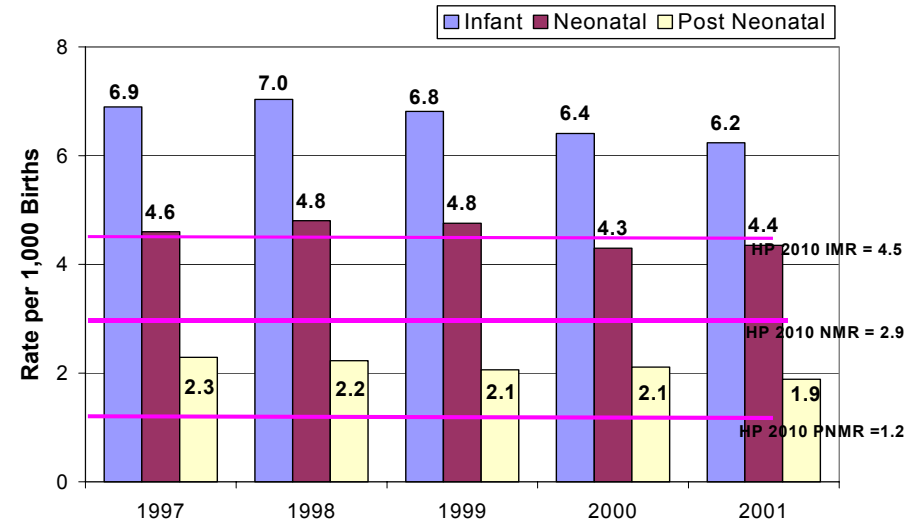
SECTION VIII. INFANT MORTALITY

In 1997, Maricopa County reached the Healthy People 2000 objective of 7.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The infant mortality rate steadily decreased from 1998 to 2001 to 6.2 per 1,000 live births. If this rate of decrease is sustained (0.2 deaths per 1,000 live births) Maricopa County should reach the Healthy People 2010 goal of 4.5 infant deaths per 1,000 live births by 2010.

Maricopa County's neonatal mortality rate reached the Healthy people 2000 goal of 4.5 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births during 2000 (4.3). The Healthy People 2010 objective is 2.9 neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births (see Figure 33).

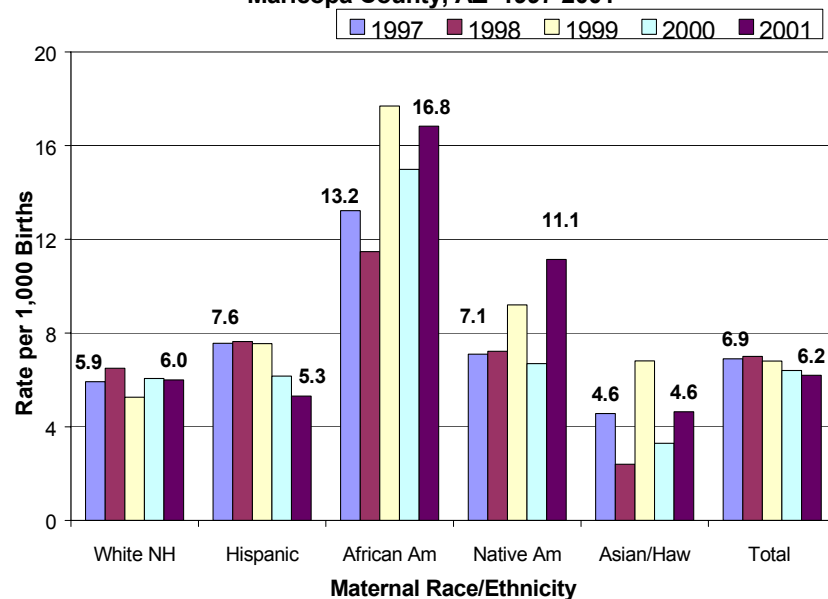
The county's post neonatal mortality rate was below the Healthy People 2000 objective of 2.5 post neonatal deaths per 1,000 live births in 1997 (2.3). The 2001 post neonatal infant mortality rate of 1.9 per 1,000 live births is approaching the 2010 objective of 1.5.

Figure 33. Infant, Neonatal, and Post-Neonatal Mortality Rates, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001



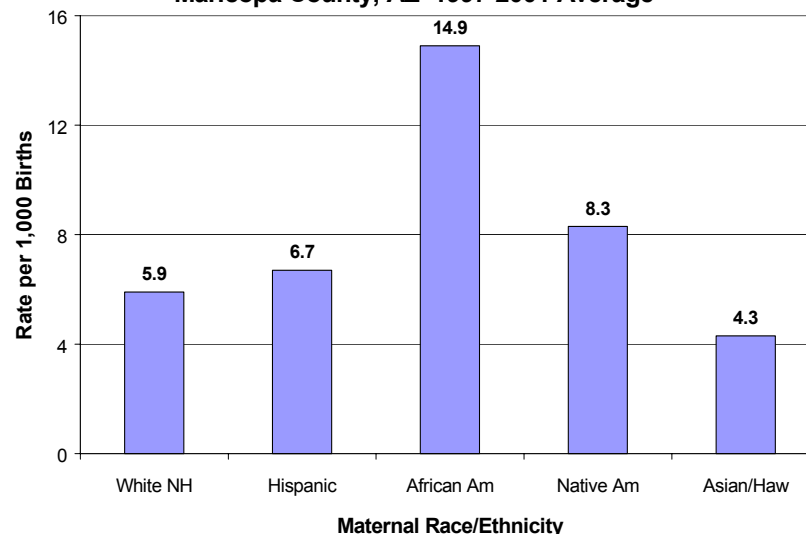
The Hispanic infant mortality rate decreased from 7.6 per 1,000 live births in 1997 to 5.3 per 1,000 live births in 2001 (see Figure 34). Note that the African American, Native American, and Asian absolute numbers of births and infant deaths are small within each year so the rates are less stable and fluctuate more. Despite the fluctuations, racial/ethnic disparities in infant mortality are evident, with African American babies experiencing more than two times the infant mortality of White babies and more than three times that of Hispanics in 2001. Native Americans had approximately twice the infant mortality of White and Hispanic babies.

Figure 34. Infant Mortality by Maternal Race/Ethnicity, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001



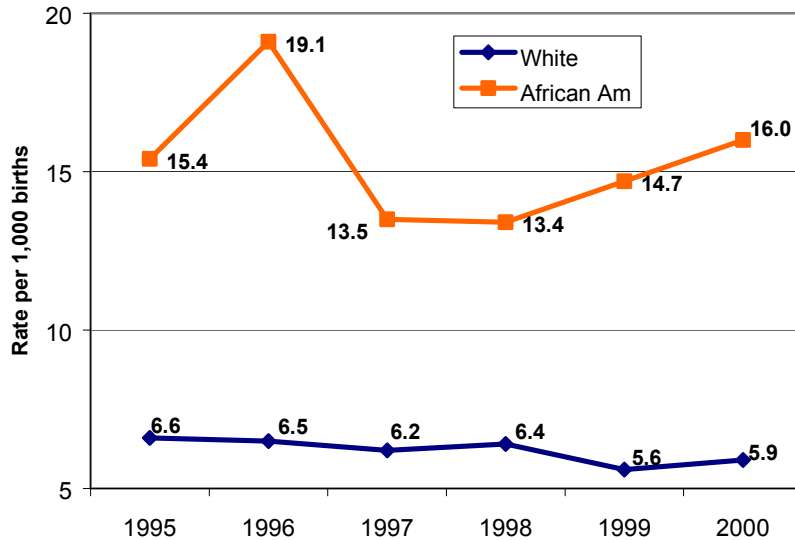
Averaged from 1997 through 2001, African Americans had the highest infant mortality rate in Maricopa County (14.9 per 1,000 live births), followed by Native Americans (8.3), Hispanics (6.7), Whites (5.9), and Asians (4.3). See Figure 35.

Figure 35. Infant Mortality by Maternal Race/Ethnicity, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001 Average



In 1995, the infant mortality rate (IMR) for Whites was 6.6 and for African Americans it was 15.4. In 2000, the IMR for Whites was 5.9 and for African Americans it was 16.0. The graph below reflects infant mortality rates for unlinked data which differs somewhat from linked data. The graph demonstrates that the gap between Whites and African Americans in infant mortality rates persists (see Figure 36).

Figure 36. Infant Mortality* (<1 year old) by Maternal Race/Ethnicity (African American and White) Maricopa County, AZ 1995-2000



*Deaths per 1,000 births. Unlinked data.

African Americans had the highest percentage of low birth weight births (see Section VII) and the highest infant mortality rate. Birth weight is associated with infant mortality. For the period 1997-2001, normal birth weight babies had an infant mortality rate of 2.5 per 1,000 live births but the low birth weight infant mortality was 19.7 and the very low birth weight infant mortality was 264.7. Very high birth weight babies also had a higher infant mortality rate of 3.2 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. Figure 37 shows infant mortality by birth weight.

Figure 37. Infant Mortality Rate for Very Low (VLBW), Low (LBW), Normal (NBW), and High Birth Weight (HBW) Births, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001

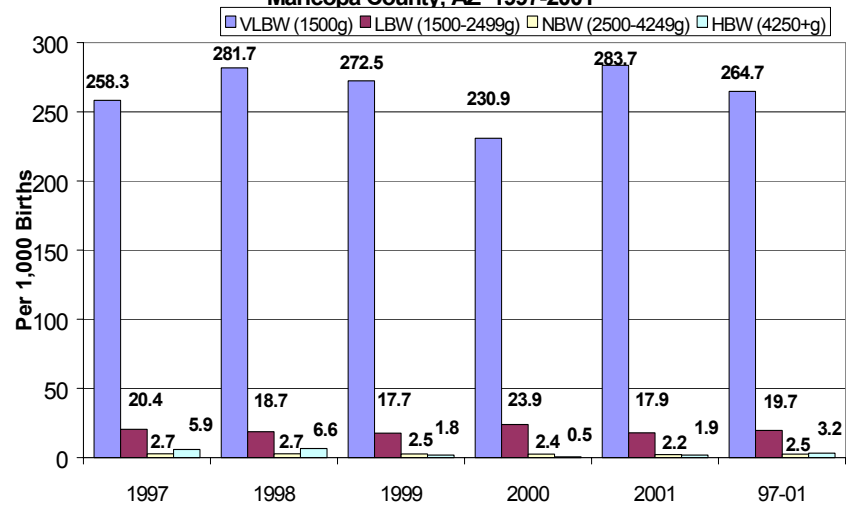


Figure 38. Infant Mortality Rate by Maternal Age Group, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001

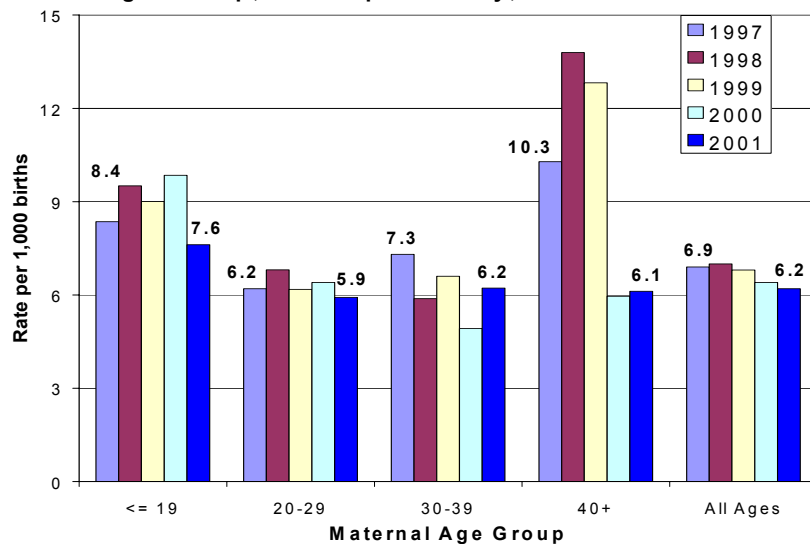
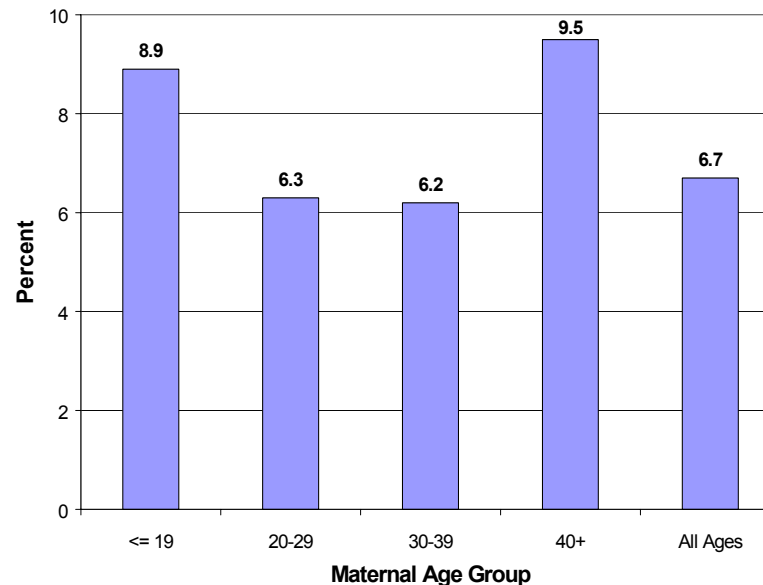


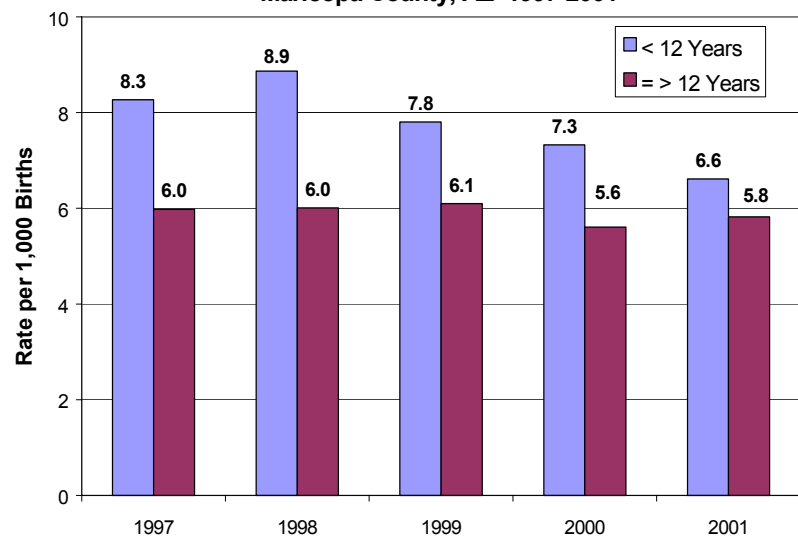
Figure 38 shows the infant mortality rate by maternal age group from 1997 to 2001. The infant mortality for the younger (≤ 19 year olds) and older (40 and older) age groups is higher than that of women in their twenties. This pattern is seen more clearly in the next figure.

Figure 39. Infant Mortality Rate by Maternal Age Group, Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001



The infant mortality rate by maternal age group shows a J-shaped curve pattern previously observed in preterm and low birth weight births (Figures 26 and 28, respectively). There were higher rates of infant mortality for the younger and older maternal age group categories than for women in their twenties (see Figure 39).

**Figure 40. Infant Mortality Rate by Maternal Education Level,
Maricopa County, AZ 1997-2001**



Women with less than twelve years of education had a higher infant mortality rate each year, 1997 through 2001, than women with twelve or more years of education (see Figure 40). The gap in infant mortality between the higher and lower levels of education appears to be closing. In 1997, the difference in the infant mortality rate between women with and without twelve years of education was 2.3 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. In 2001, the difference was only 0.8. This may be explained by the shift in the distribution towards higher grades (9th to 11th) of women with <12 years of education (see Figure 13).